CLAIMS

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1.   1.   A method for creating an automated bidding process among energy Providers and end

2.   users in which a moderating computer collects economic incentive data from each

3.   Provider of a plurality of energy Providers, processes the economic incentive data and

4.   selects at least two Providers of the plurality of energy Providers to provide energy to at

5.   least one end user, based on an economic choice, wherein the method comprises:

6.   a.   receiving in the moderating computer, economic incentive data specifying the

7.   economic incentive each Provider will place on a unit of energy provided to the at

8.   least one end user, processing the economic incentive data to determine which of the

9.   economic incentive data correspond to the at least one end user and to produce

10.   derivative data, and storing the economic incentive data and the derivative data in a

11.   data base of the moderating computer as first end-user set data;

12.   b.   in the moderating computer, transmitting at least a portion of the first end-user set

13.   data to at least a portion of the plurality of energy Providers;

14.   c.   in the moderating computer, processing the first end-user set data and generating

15.   provider selection data; and

16.   d.   in the moderating computer, selecting at least two Providers of the plurality of energy

17.   Providers to provide energy to the at least one end user, with each of the at least two

18.   Providers to supply a portion of the energy to be used by the at least one end user at

19.   an end-user facility during at least a portion of a specific future time interval.

1.   2.   A method of Claim 1 including, in the moderating computer, transmitting a selection

2.   notification to each of the at least two Providers.

1   3.   A method of Claim 2 including, in the moderating computer, transmitting to the at least

2   one end user's local energy distribution company at least a portion of the information

3   contained in the selection notification.

1   4.   A method of Claim 1 including, in the moderating computer, transmitting at least a

2   portion of the economic incentive data to the at least one end user.

1   5.   A method of Claim 4 in which at least a portion of the economic incentive data associated

2   with the at least one end user is made available by the moderating computer to the at least

3   one end user by means of an Internet website or computer bulletin board.

1   6.   A method of Claim 1 comprising, in the moderating computer, receiving decision rules

2   from the at least one end user, processing the first end-user set data and the decision rules

3   to generate provider selection data, and selecting the at least two Providers of the

4   plurality of energy Providers for the provision of energy to the at least one end user.

1   7.   A method of Claim 1 in which the at least one end user includes one or more resellers of

2   energy supply.

1   8.   A method of Claim 1 in which the moderating computer transmits at least a portion of the

2   first end-user set data to at least a portion of the plurality of energy Providers subsequent

3   to the selection of the at least two Providers.

1   9.   A method of Claim 1 in which the moderating computer transmits to each of the at least

2   two Providers one or more specifications of the estimated energy requirements that

3   Provider should expect to provide to the at least one end user during the portion of the

4   specific future time interval.

1   10.   A method of Claim 9 in which the specifications are made available by the moderating

2   computer to the at least two Providers by means of an Internet website or computer

3   bulletin board.

1   11.   A method of Claim 1 in which the moderating computer transmits to the at least two

2   Providers, periodic usage reports associated with the at least one end user.

1   12.   A method of Claim 11 in which the periodic usage reports are made available by the

2   moderating computer to the at least two Providers by means of an Internet website or

3   computer bulletin board.

1   13.   A method of Claim 1 in which the moderating computer transmits, to the at least one end

2   user, periodic usage reports associated with the at least one end user.

1   14.   A method of Claim 13 in which the periodic usage reports associated with the at least one

2   end user are made available by the moderating computer to the at least one end user by

3   means of an Internet website or computer bulletin board.

1   15.   A method of Claim 1 in which the at least one end user's local energy distribution

2   company transmits periodic usage reports to the at least two Providers or the at least one

3   end user.

1   16.   A method of Claim 11 in which the local energy distribution company includes an

2   independent third party meter reading service entity.

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1   17.   A method of Claims 15 in which the periodic usage reports are made available to the at

2   least two Providers or the at least one end user by means of an Internet website or

3   computer bulletin board.

1 18. A method of Claim 1 in which the derivative data provided by the Moderator includes

2 information derived from the prices or quantities of energy contained in the economic

3 incentive data received by the moderating computer from the plurality of energy

4 Providers.

1 19. A method of Claim 1 in which at least one Provider of the at least two Providers is

2 selected by the moderating computer to supply a specific quantity or block of energy.

1 20. A method of Claim 1 in which at least one Provider of the at least two Providers is

2 selected by the moderating computer as a default Provider or a contract Provider

1 21. A method for creating an automated bidding process among energy Providers and end

2   users in which a moderating computer collects economic incentive data from each

3   Provider of a plurality of energy Providers, processes the economic incentive data and

4   distributes processed data to a first control computer associated with at least one end user,

5   thereby enabling the first control computer to select at least two Providers of the plurality

6   of energy Providers to provide energy to the at least one end user, based on an economic

7   choice, wherein the method comprises:

8 a.   receiving in the moderating computer, economic incentive data specifying the economic

9   incentive each Provider will place on a unit of energy provided to the at least one end

10   user, processing the economic incentive data to determine which of the economic

11   incentive data correspond to the first control computer and to produce derivative data,

12   and storing the economic incentive data and the derivative data in a data base of the

13   moderating computer as first control computer data;

14 b. in the moderating computer, transmitting at least a portion of the first control computer

15   data to the first control computer associated with the at least one end user;

16 c. in the moderating computer, transmitting at least a portion of the first control computer

17   data to at least a portion of the plurality of energy Providers;

18 d. in the first control computer, receiving the first control computer data, processing the first

19   control computer data and generating provider selection data; and

20 e. in the first control computer, selecting at least two Providers of the plurality of energy

21   Providers to provide energy to the at least one end user, with each of the at least two

22   Providers to supply a portion of the energy to be used by the at least one end user at an

23   end-user facility during at least a portion of a specific future time interval.

1   22.   A method of Claim 21 including, in the first control computer, notifying the moderating

2   computer of the selection of the at least two Providers to provide energy to the at least

3   one end user.

1   23.   A method of Claim 21 in which the first control computer is a computer adjunct to the

2   moderating computer.

1   24.   A method of Claim 21 in which the moderating computer performs at least a portion of

2   the first control computer's processing and communications functions.

1   25.   A method of Claim 21 comprising, in the first control computer, receiving decision rules

2   from the at least one end user, processing the first control computer data and the decision

3   rules to generate provider selection data, and selecting the at least two Providers of the

4   plurality of energy Providers for the provision of energy to the at least one end user.

1   26.   A method of Claim 21 in which the moderating computer transmits to each of the at least

2   two Providers one or more specifications of the estimated energy requirements that

3   Provider should expect to provide to the at least one end user during the portion of the

4   specific future time interval.

1   27.   A method of Claim 21 in which the at least one end user's local energy distribution

2   company transmits periodic usage reports to the at least two Providers or the at least one

3   end user.

1   28.   A method of Claim 21 in which the first control computer is operated by the at least one

2   end user, by a reseller to end users, or by the local energy distribution company that

3   distributes energy to the at least one end user associated with the first control computer.

1   29.   A method for managing the provision of energy, by at least two Providers of a plurality

2   of energy Providers to at least one end user of a plurality of end user in accordance with

3   economic incentives arrived at through a bidding process involving a central processor,

4   referred to as a moderator, comprising the steps of:

5   a.   collecting energy availability data for each of the Providers, each Provider

6   entering the energy availability data, corresponding to the energy the Provider can

7   make available to the at least one end user, into its energy management

8   computer's energy management database;

9   b.   each energy management computer (i) receiving management instructions from

10   that Provider's energy management administrator, (ii) formulating economic

11   incentives for the portion of the Provider's energy the Provider can make available

12   to the at least one end user, based on the management instructions and the energy

13   availability data, and (iii) transmitting the economic incentives to the moderator;

14   c.   in the moderator, receiving the economic incentives, entering the economic

15   incentives from each Provider in the moderator's database, sorting the economic

16   incentives to identify all economic incentives associated with the at least one end

17   user producing derivative data, and storing the economic incentives and the

18   derivative data in the moderator's database as first end-user set data;

19   d.   in the moderator, transmitting at least a portion of the first end-user set data to at

20   least a portion of the plurality of energy Providers;

21   e.   in each Provider's energy management computer, entering the portion of the first

22   end-user set data received from the moderator in each Provider's energy

23   management database, and adjusting each Provider's economic incentives in

24   consideration of the first end-user set data reflecting at least one other Provider's

25   economic incentives;

26   f.   in the moderator, processing the first end-user set data, thereby generating

27   provider selection data, and populating the moderator's database with the provider

28   selection data;

29   g.   in the moderator, selecting at least two Providers of the plurality of energy

30   Providers, in accordance with the provider selection data, for the provision of

31   energy to the at least one end user, with each of the at least two Providers to

32   supply a portion of the energy to be used at the same at least one end-user facility

33   during at least a portion of a specific future time interval;

34   h.   the moderator notifying each of the at least two Providers of their selection and

35   transmitting, to a computer associated with each of the at least two Providers'

36   energy management computers, one or more specifications of an estimated energy

37   requirement that Provider should expect to provide to the at least one end user;

38   and

39   i.   each of the selected Providers processing the specifications and periodic usage

40   reports, received from the moderator or from the at least one end user's local

41   energy distribution company, and adjusting its energy production in accordance

42   with the specifications and periodic usage reports.

1   30.   A method of Claim 29 in which at least a portion of processing and communications

2   functions of the energy management computer are performed by an adjunct computer or a

3   computer associated with the energy management computer.

1   31.   An energy bidding moderator for enabling the selection of at least two Providers of a

2   plurality of energy Providers for the provision of energy to at least one end user, in

3   accordance with economic incentives generated by the Providers, comprising:

4   a.   a computer with a processor and a memory;

5   b.   means for receiving economic incentive data from the at least two Providers and

6   storing the economic incentive data identified with the at least two Providers in

7   the memory;

8   c.   means for processing the economic incentive data received from the plurality of

9   energy Providers to determine a first subset of the economic incentive data

10   associated with the at least one end user and to produce derivative data, storing

11   the economic incentive data and the derivative data in the memory as first end-

12   user set data, and generating provider selection data; and

13   d.   means for transmitting at least a portion of the first end-user set data to at least a

14   portion of the plurality of energy Providers.

1   32.   A moderator of Claim 31 further including means for receiving decision rules from an

2   administrator associated with the moderator and applying the decision rules to the first

3   end-user set data to generate the provider selection data.

1   33.   A moderator of Claim 31 including means for selecting at least two Providers to supply

2   energy to the at least one end user, with each of the at least two Providers to supply a

3   portion of the energy to be used at the same at least one end-user facility during at least a

4   portion of a specific future time interval.

1   34.   A moderator of Claim 31 including means of notifying each of the at least two Providers

2   of its selection by the moderator to provide energy to the at least one end user and

3   notifying the at least one end user's local energy distribution company of the Provider

4   selections.

1   35.   A moderator of Claim 31 including means for transmitting at least a portion of the

2   economic incentive data to the at least one end user.

1   36.   A method for conducting an automated bidding process among a plurality of energy

2   Providers and end users, comprising:

3   a.   collecting economic incentive data from a plurality of energy Providers;

4   b.   prioritizing the economic incentive data that apply to at least one end user;

5   c.   designating at least two Providers of the plurality of energy Providers to be the

6   designated Providers of energy to the at least one end user on the basis of the

7   prioritized economic incentive data; and

8   d.   informing each of the at least two designated Providers of its designation, one or

9   more specifications of estimated energy requirements and periodic usage reports

10   associated with the at least one end user, thereby enabling each of the at least two

11   Providers to efficiently adjust its energy supply during the time interval in which

12   each designated Provider supplies energy to the at least one end user.

1   37.   A method for creating an automated bidding process among energy Providers and Buyers

2   of energy in which a moderating computer collects economic incentive data from each

3   Provider of a plurality of energy Providers, processes the economic incentive data and

4   selects at least two Providers of the plurality of energy Providers to provide energy to a

5   first Buyer, based on an economic choice, wherein the method comprises, in the

6   Moderator:

7   a.   receiving from the first Buyer, a request for energy supply to be delivered to a

8   specified delivery destination during at least one specific future time interval;

9   b. processing the request and distributing the processed request to a plurality of energy

10   Providers;

11   c. receiving a response, including the economic incentive data, from at least two

12   Providers;

13   d. entering the economic incentive data in a database, processing the economic incentive

14   data, producing derivative data and storing the economic incentive data and the

15   derivative data in a database of the Moderator as first Buyer set data;

16   e. transmitting at least a portion of the first Buyer set data to at least a portion of the

17   plurality of energy Providers;

18   f. processing the first Buyer set data and selecting at least two Providers of the plurality

19   of energy Providers to provide energy to the first Buyer, with each of the at least two

20   Providers to supply a portion of the energy to be used by the at least one end user at

21   an end-user facility during at least a portion of a specific future time interval; and

22   g. transmitting a selection notification to each of the at least two Providers selected by

23   the Moderator to provide energy to the first Buyer.

1   38.   A method of Claim 37 in which the Moderator (i) receives request data from the first

2   Buyer on a first software defined template as part of an Internet website or computer

3   bulletin board, (ii) distributes the processed requests to the energy Providers by posting

4   the processed requests on a website or computer bulletin board accessible to the energy

5   Providers, and (iii) receives response data from at least two Providers on a website or

6   computer bulletin board by means of a second software defined template for the entry of

7   the response data by the at least two Providers.

1 39. A method of Claim 37 in which the Moderator receives a set of decision rules from the

2   first Buyer and processes the economic incentive data and the decision rules to generate

3   first Buyer set data.

1 40. A method for creating an automated bidding process among energy Providers and Buyers

2   of energy in which a moderating computer collects economic incentive data from each

3   Provider of a plurality of energy Providers, processes the economic incentive data and

4   distributes processed data to a first control computer associated with at least one Buyer,

5   thereby enabling the first control computer to select at least two Providers of the plurality

6   of energy Providers to provide energy to the Buyer, based on an economic choice,

7   wherein the method comprises:

8   a. in the Buyer, formulating a request for energy supply to be delivered to a specified

9   delivery destination during at least one specific future time interval and transmitting

10   that request to the moderating computer;

11   b. in the moderating computer, processing such request and distributing a processed

12   request to a plurality of energy Providers;

13   c. in at least two Providers, receiving the processed request, formulating a response to

14   the processed request and transmitting such response, including economic incentive

15   data, to the moderating computer;

16   d. in the moderating computer, receiving the response from at least two Providers,

17   including economic incentive data specifying the economic incentive each Provider

18   will place on a unit of energy provided to the Buyer, processing the economic

19   incentive data to determine which of the economic incentive data correspond to a first

20   control computer and to produce derivative data, and storing the economic incentive

21   data and the derivative data in a data base of the moderating computer as first control

22   computer data;

23   e.   in the moderating computer, transmitting at least a portion of the first control

24   computer data to the first control computer associated with the Buyer;

25   f.   In the moderating computer, transmitting at least a portion of the first control

26   computer data to at least a portion of the plurality of energy Providers;

27   g.   in the first control computer, receiving the first control computer data, processing the

28   first control computer data, and generating provider selection data; and

29   h.   in the first control computer, selecting at least two Providers of the plurality of energy

30   Providers to provide energy to the Buyer, with each of the at least two Providers to

31   supply a portion of the energy to be used by the at least one end user at an

32   end-user facility during at least a portion of a specific future time interval.

1   41.   A method of Claim 40 in which the moderating computer performs at least a portion of the

2   processing and communications functions of the first control computer

1   42.   A Moderator for enabling the selection of at least two Providers of a plurality of energy

2   Providers for the provision of energy to the at least one end user, in accordance with

3   economic incentives arrived at through a bidding process, comprising:

4   a.   a computer with a processor and a memory;

5   b.   means for receiving from a Buyer, a request for energy to be delivered to a specified delivery

6   destination during at least one specific future time interval and storing the request in the

7   memory;

8   c.   means for processing the request to formulate a processed request;

9   d.   means for transmitting the processed request to the plurality of energy Providers;

10   e.   means for receiving a response, including the economic incentive data, relating to the request

11   for energy from at least two Providers and storing the data in the memory;

12   f.   means within the processor for producing derivative data based on the economic incentive

13   data and storing the economic incentive data and derivative data in the memory as first Buyer

14   set data;

15   g.   means for transmitting at least a portion of the first Buyer set data to at least a portion of the

16   plurality of energy Providers;

17   h.   means for processing the first Buyer set data and selecting at least two Providers of the

18   plurality of energy Providers to provide energy to the Buyer, with each of the at least two

19   Providers to supply a portion of the energy to be used by the at least one end user at an end-

20   user facility during at least a portion of a specific future time interval; and

21   i.   means for transmitting a selection notification to each of the at least two Providers.

43.   A Moderator of Claim 42 comprising a website or a computer bulletin board (i) provided

      with a first software defined template, accessible by the Buyer, for the entry of request

      data by the Buyer, (ii) accessible by the plurality of energy Providers, for the posting of

4   requests processed by the Moderator and (iii) provided with a second software defined

5   template, accessible by the plurality of energy Providers, for the entry of response data by

6   the energy Providers.

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